

City of Springfield  
Regular Meeting

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL REGULAR MEETING OF  
THE SPRINGFIELD CITY COUNCIL HELD  
MONDAY, MAY 22, 2006

The City of Springfield Council met in special regular session in the Jesse Maine Room, 225 Fifth Street, Springfield, Oregon, on Monday, May 22, 2006 at 6:42 p.m., with Mayor Leiken presiding.

ATTENDANCE

Present were Mayor Leiken and Councilors Ballew, Fitch, Ralston, Lundberg, and Woodrow. Also present were City Manager Gino Grimaldi, Assistant City Manager Cynthia Pappas, City Attorney Joe Leahy, City Recorder Amy Sowa and members of the staff.

Councilor Pishioneri was absent (excused).

BUSINESS FROM THE CITY MANAGER

1. Authorize the City Manager to Negotiate and Sign Amendment to Development and Disposition Agreement (DDA) with General Growth.

Community Development Manager John Tamulonis presented the staff report on this item. At the request of General Growth (Attachment 1 in the agenda packet), should the City amend the DDA with General Growth to allow a specific firm--Ashley Furniture Homestore--to substitute for one of the five 'anchor tenants', 'major store', 'general merchandise retailer' required in the 1988 DDA (Attachment 2 in the agenda packet, excerpts pages 1-6) and as Council allowed Cinemark Theatres in 1998 (Attachment 2 excerpts to 1998 Amendment to DDA, pages 7 & 8)?

Ashley Furniture is touted as the largest selling brand of furniture and the fourth largest furniture manufacturer in the U.S (Attachment 3 in the agenda packet). With time of the essence, Council could consider directing the City Manager to solidify the amendments proposed below:

1. Allow Ashley Furniture Homestores as a specific exception to the DDA.
2. Accept General Growth's financial support of up to \$10,000 for a high-quality "Welcome to Springfield" sign the City would build and maintain on a suitable site (such as near the Beltline Road-Gateway Street intersection) to welcome visitors to the community.
3. Accept General Growth's agreement to work cooperatively with LTD to accommodate improvements LTD would design, build, and entirely fund as its proposed EmX station along Gateway Street to replace the existing on-site bus station. Attachment 4 shows the general location of proposed LTD facilities: EMX two-way bus stations with two-buses per side (one EMX and one regular) to allow pick up and drop off only (no bus layovers) and a ten-foot wide covered walkway to the Gateway Mall Food Court's north entrance. The LTD proposal includes financing for all necessary modifications on the Gateway Mall site and along Gateway Street: parking, landscaping, site plans, striping and pedestrian crossing of Gateway Mall road and driveways, removal of the existing bus station and restoration of the parking area surrounding it to similar, suitable parking configuration & landscaping; the bus-only exit; as well as Gateway Street signalization, sidewalks, and signage.

Mr. Tamulonis said over time changes had come to malls and they now included more entertainment. He said a store that brought people to the mall was usually preferable and noted that the anchors often changed over time. General Growth, owners of the Gateway Mall, had proposed bringing in Ashley Furniture. He gave a brief background of Ashley Furniture. Staff looked at making an exception and also looked at a more generic solution to the agreement. He discussed some of the suggestions made by General Growth as noted in their letter request. Staff suggested having Ashley as an exception at this time. If Council directed, staff could spend more time looking at a more broad definition for an anchor for the future.

Mr. Tamulonis distributed a brochure from Ashley Furniture for Council to review. He referred to a proposed signature sign that would be provided by General Growth for a cost of up to \$10,000 welcoming visitors to Springfield. He said they may wait to put up such a sign until after the Beltline intersection was completed. He discussed other improvements requested by the City of Gateway Mall, including the LTD EmX station and proposed covered walkway.

Discussion was held regarding the location of the station and the proposed covered walkway. The station and walkway would be at LTD's expense.

Councilor Fitch said she preferred doing this as an exception rather than an amendment. She supported a nice welcoming sign and appreciated the decision to wait to put it up after the intersection was done. She said she had heard from citizens that used LTD that a walkway would be very much appreciated to get to the Mall from the station. She said she did not want to look into all of the industry exceptions that had been listed, but the one exception for Ashley Furniture seemed like a good deal.

Councilor Ballew said there were a lot of home furnishing stores in the City and she asked if placing this one in the Mall gave them an advantage.

Ron Glover, Manager of the Gateway Mall, addressed Councilor Ballew's question. Mr. Glover thanked the Mayor, the Council and City staff for helping them see this through. He discussed his history with malls over the last twenty-five years. He said furniture stores preferred to place themselves around their competitors, similar to car dealers and jewelers. He explained why. He said there was no special advantage for this store to go into the Mall.

Councilor Ballew said she was still concerned about the LTD station in front of the Gateway Mall. She said it would still require people to walk a long way from the bus stop, especially elderly people.

Mr. Tamulonis said the distance from the current bus stop to the food court was approximately the same as the current bus stop. He also noted that Safeway and Fred Meyer had told staff that they liked to be close to their competitors for the same reason as furniture stores.

Councilor Lundberg said it was an art and a science of what would work in a mall. She said there was research which told what worked and what didn't work. She said in a City of young families, selling furniture and tires worked well. She didn't have an issue with the furniture store and agreed an exception was the way to go. She noted that \$10,000 didn't buy much of a sign and if the City wanted a signature sign, it would cost more. She said she would like to separate LTD and what was accomplished by this exception. She said other issues with the mall should be addressed, including making the back side of the mall facing the freeway more eye catching.

Councilor Ballew said she was supportive of Ashley Furniture going in at the Mall.

Mayor Leiken asked how long the Emporium building had been vacant.

Mr. Glover said records indicated it had been a little over three years. He introduced the Operations Director and Accountant for the Gateway Mall.

Mayor Leiken said Gateway had become a signature piece of Springfield. He said he didn't want to see big vacant spot off the freeway. He agreed to the exception for Ashley Furniture. The mall had been there for 16 years. He discussed retail clusters. Malls continued to evolve and this was not a bad time to discuss possible changes. He said the exception was the way to go at this time. He would like to continue to see building up of the aesthetics of the mall. He said he was very pleased with the appearance of Kohl's, but the appearance along the freeway still needed work. He said he was not familiar with the cost of signs, but agreed that it should be a signature sign. Such a sign would be a plus for the City and for the mall. He said this was a good opportunity and he thanked Mr. Glover for working with the City on this. The City was committed to working with the mall.

Councilor Fitch thanked Mr. Glover and his staff for the proactive measures they had taken by installing additional cameras for security at the mall. She said it created a climate where people felt safer when going to the mall.

Councilor Ballew discussed the EmX project. She cautioned against entering into agreements regarding projects that may not happen. She suggested looking to the City engineer for his opinion about the location of the station.

Mr. Glover said he would appreciate any information in that regard to make sure they were on the right course.

Councilor Lundberg thanked Mr. Glover for focusing on the family and for the improved security. She said it was comforting to know the mall was a family oriented place and a secure place because many young people went to the mall. She said it was important to coordinate all the upcoming construction projects to keep the mall in the loop.

Councilor Ralston said he felt Ashley Furniture filled the requirement and he supported making the exception for this business. He asked about an issue with an accessway and the LTD Station.

Mr. Glover said the concerns were to insure and forecast traffic patterns and any congestion during the holiday season. He referred to the map to explain and discussed the company's concerns. He said he was trying to find the compromise that worked for everyone. He said the covered walkway was another issue and he appreciated LTD was willing to build the walkway and match it up to the building's current design. He appreciated the comments from Council about the changes that had occurred over the last year. He said in time, there may be a new look for the entrance of the mall. He said the mall would want flexibility to have a covered walkway match the future design. That could fulfill what LTD and the mall needed.

Councilor Ralston asked if LTD would be responsible to make the walkway match any future designs.

Mr. Glover said that was correct and LTD had said they would try to work with the mall on the walkway. He noted some of the options considered. It was a matter of working together to solve the problems.

Councilor Ralston expressed concern about traffic issues and people being able to get to the mall during the construction of the I-5/Beltline interchange. He asked Mr. Glover if he had the same concerns.

Mr. Glover said that was a concern. He said he had worked through a major interchange design in Colorado. He said the mall was working with ODOT to work through the issues. The impact could be strong and he wanted the mall to be strong with Kohl's, Ashley and other potential stores before all that came into place. If they had a strong core base, they could survive the delays and problems through the process.

Councilor Ralston said that was his point. He said it would be hard to bring in a big retailer during construction times.

Mr. Glover said the owner of Ashley was aware of the situation and had the same opinion, that it would be good when it was done.

Councilor Ballew said traffic would increase with the addition of this store.

Mr. Tamulonis said it was in the projections they had for the mall and the EmX was considered as well. He said staff had talked to ODOT about traffic control during construction of the interchange. Most of the work on that project would be done at night, leaving lanes open.

Mr. Glover agreed. He said he had confidence the mall would weather the construction, but needed to respect the issues and remain cautious. It could leave an impact that was lasting if the mall was not strong in their base now. He said the mall would remain active with ODOT through that process.

Mayor Leiken said there was a lot of loyalty of Springfielders' to shop in Springfield. He said there would be inconveniences, but once the intersection was complete, there would be better traffic flows than were currently in place. He said the mall could count on support from his family and many others in Springfield.

Mr. Glover said if the Mayor, Councilors or anyone else had problems with the mall, to come by the office to speak to staff. He said staff would listen, address the issues and back them up.

**IT WAS MOVED BY COUNCILOR WOODROW WITH A SECOND BY COUNCILOR LUNDBERG TO DIRECT THE CITY MANAGER TO NEGOTIATE THE THREE AMENDMENTS WITH THE INFORMATION PROVIDED TONIGHT PROPOSED TO THE GENERAL GROWTH DEVELOPMENT AND DISPOSITION AGREEMENT (DDA) AND SIGN A REVISED AGREEMENT WITH AMENDMENTS TO THE DDA. THE MOTION PASSED WITH A VOTE OF 5 FOR AND 0 AGAINST (1 ABSENT – Pishioneri).**

BUSINESS FROM THE CITY ATTORNEY

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:18 p.m.

Minutes Recorder Amy Sowa

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Sidney W. Leiken  
Mayor

Attest:

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City Recorder